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A continuing interest in the doings of the offshore fishing craft based in this port and elsewhere in this area, and especially in the vessels of other nationalities which they sight on the various fishing grounds, and some of whose radio traffic they overhear, make it advisable to make contact from time to time with various of the more experienced offshore skippers and with known and well placed representatives of their operators ashore. The sources described above were contacted by a naval interviewing officer as the result of the two brief newspaper items quoted in paragraph 1 below.

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1. "Soviet Ships Fish on Grand Banks
 "St John's, NFID. (AP) - The harbor pilots' office said Spanish trawler captains had reported that two Russian trawlers are fishing on the Newfoundland Grand Banks.
 "It was the first time Soviet Ships had been spotted on the well-known fishing grounds. The Spaniards identified the Russian vessels as the Odessa and Sevastapol, both of 1670 tons."

"Reds Fish off Newfoundland Coast

"St John's, NFID., April 20 (AP) - The Royal Canadian Air Force said today two Russian trawlers have been operating on the Grand Banks off the south-east coast of Newfoundland.

"The maritime air command at Halifax, N.S. said the two trawlers were sighted and identified as Russian by aircraft."

2. As a result of noting the above newspaper items, three sources were interviewed. They made the following statements in substance:

Source A (a) We have just returned from the Banks [30 Apr 54]. While there we did not see any ships which we thought were Soviet trawlers. However, since we customarily keep the inter-ship radio phone turned on, we did hear other fishermen in the area discussing the "strangers" they had seen. These radio conversations indicated that the other fishermen had sighted two ships not customarily present on the Banks and wondered what vessels they were. I cannot identify by name any of the other ships whose people took part in the radio discussions.

Source B (b) We have just returned from the Grand Banks area [30 Apr 54]. We did not see the ships under discussion ourselves. However, on occasions when we were communicating with the marine radio phone operator with whom we usually make contact, we learned that he had experienced interference caused by what he believed to be some vessel in the vicinity transmitting on a frequency close to that of his station. I was unable to identify the language used by the ship or station which was interfering with the transmission from our regular radio marine contact. I don't believe I would be able to distinguish between Spanish, Portuguese, or French, but I don't think that the voices which caused the interference were talking in any of those languages.

Source C (c) During the night of 29 April 1954 the night operator at the marine radio phone station indicated above wrote the following message to me as his supervisor:

[In the note quoted below "F/V" is the abbreviation for fishing vessel, "MSO" stands for Marine Service Operator and "QRM" is the international radio code signal meaning "interference"]

3. "Bill: This evening at about 7:50 PM PDST the [an F/V] was talking to [the operating representative ashore]. Several times during the conversation he complained of the severe interference from F/V's or rather, as he said, Portuguese and other foreign ships talking on [the transmitting frequency of the radio marine station]. I tried to talk to him after he signed off with his contact but MSO signed off too fast and shut down before I could get him. During the conversation he said [another US F/V] was in his vicinity and he was going to contact them and tell them there was a death message for them.

"About 8:30 PM the same ship called in and after his call [I] talked to them and inquired about QRM. [He] said that he was not getting any right now but that earlier when they were out on Grand Banks they could hear foreign ships, etc. talking in the afternoon and evening. At present they were about 550 miles [east of] Boston on Quereau Bank.

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"Apparently those were foreign ships on Grand Banks, or else it is the long-range transmissions from ships off the coast of Europe.

"Maybe someone will be interested. If foreign ships on Grand Banks, then they are operating illegally in Zone 2 for frequency".

(Navy Interviewing Officer's Note: As of 5 May 54 no complaints had been filed by any fishing concerns local to the area /relative to interference with transmission of the local marine radio phone station/ with either the Federal Communications Commission or the Telephone Company here.)

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